Mysterious death of tribal folk painter

3412. SHRI KARTAR SINGH DUGGAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the truth about the mysterious death of the tribal folk painter Janagan Singh Shyani in Japan during his visit; and

(b) whether any compensation is contemplated to be sanctioned to his family by the Central or the State Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) The Police and hospital authorities in Japan and the post-mortem conducted in Bhopal, have attributed the death of Shri Janagan Singh Shyani to suicide.

(b) Shri Janagan Singh Shyam was an employee of the Bharat Bhavan Trust. Bhopal. The Trust has made ex-gratia and gratuity payments to the family. Orders for compassionate appointment of the widow of late Shri Shyam have also been issued. The Government of Madhya Pradesh has met the cost of transportation of the dead body of Shri Shyam from Japan to Bhopal.

Reported Pakistan's support to militants

3413. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as per recent statement of the former Pakistan Prime Minister the Kashmiri militants find a lot of support within Pakistan;

(b) whether she has advocated for open borders between India and Pakistan and also for bridging the gulf between people of India and Pak; and

(c) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) The State of Jammu & Kashmir is an integral part of the Indian Union, a part of the territory of the State is under the forcible and illegal occupation of Pakistan.

There can be no justification whatsoever, for the daily killings of men, women and children in Jammu and Kashmir by Pakistan sponsored terrorist groups. Government are firmly resolved to counter the forces of terrorism and violence, until they are decisively crushed.

(b) and (c) Government are of the view that the foundations of durable peace between India and Pakistan must ultimately be laid in the hearts and minds of the people of bom countries. The promotion of people-to-people contacts between the two countries will naturally serve this objective, and also contribute to India's desire to establish peaceful, friendly and cooperative ties with Pakistan. In keeping with this approach, Government announced on 9th July 2001, measures to make travel between the two countries as easy and simple as possible, including through additional facilities at Attari, Munabao in Rajasthan and at designated points along the International Boundary and the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir.

Indo-U.S. relations

3414. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) where do our relations stand with USA after its new President took office;

(b) whether there is any pressure from USA to hold talks with Pakistan;

(c) whether Government have discussed terrorism and security environment in the region with USA recently; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) Since assuming office in January 2001, U.S. President George W. Bush has on a number of occasions conveyed to the Prime Minister the importance he attaches to relations between India and the United States and his commitment to work towards further strengthening this relationship. The two sides have maintained a high level of bilateral engagement, both at political and official levels.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) International terrorism and regional security environment are part of the broad-based agenda of dialogue between the two countries. These issues were discussed during the Foreign Office Consultations and the Asian Security Dialogue between the Foreign Secretary and the U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs on 17 May 2001 and in the meeting of

† Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.